[This chapter is a summary rather than an actual translation of the original Russian. For a complete translation see Kamchadal Source 2.]

## CHAP. XVII.[1]

### *Of the* BIRTH *of their* CHILDREN.

163

IN general theſe people are not fruitful, for I could never learn that any one man had ten children by the ſame woman.

844 Their women, as they ſay, have commonly very eaſy births: *Steller* was preſent at the delivery of one of theſe women, who went out of the hut about her ordinary buſineſs, and in a quarter of an hour afterwards was carrying her child in her arms, without any change in her countenance. He likewiſe relates, that he ſaw

845 another woman who was in labour three days, and to his great ſurpriſe was at laſt happily delivered of a child, which came double, preſenting the hips firſt. The conjurers attributed the occaſion of this unnatural poſture to the father, who in the time that the child ought to have been born was employed in making ſledges, and bending the wood over his knee. Such ridiculous

844 cauſes do they aſſign for every uncommon effect. The women are delivered upon their knees, in preſence of as many people as are in the village, without diſtinction of age or ſex. They wipe the new-born child with tow, and tie the navel-ſtring with thread made of nettles, and then cut it with a knife of flint: they throw the placenta to the dogs. They put chewed epilobium upon the navel, and wrap the infant in tow inſtead of ſwaddling cloaths: then every one careſſes it, taking it in their arms, kiſſing it, and rejoicing with the parents. This is the only ceremony which they uſe. They can hardly be ſaid to have profeſſed midwives, and for the moſt part the mother or neareſt relation performs the office.

The

1: Krasheninnikov N-5 (1736-40) 1764 Kamchadal



757 certain herb which they rub upon their gums, as alſo the leaves of the cranberry * and blackberry †. The Coſſacks cure themſelves with decoctions of the tops of cedar, and by eating wild garlick. The good effects of this medicine were felt by all the people that were in the *Kamtſchatka* expedition.

164 757 Boils are a moſt dangerous diſeaſe in *Kamtſchatka*, cauſing the death of numbers. They are very large, being often two and ſometimes three inches over; and when they break they open in about forty or fifty little holes. It is looked upon to be a very dangerous caſe, when no matter comes from theſe openings; and thoſe that recover are confined to their beds, ſometimes ſix and ſometimes ten weeks. The *Kamtſchadales* uſe raw hare-ſkins to bring the matter to a ſuppuration. The palſy, cancer, and *French* diſeaſe, are ſuppoſed to be incurable; the laſt, they ſay, was not heard of before the arrival of the *Ruſſians*. There is likewiſe another diſtemper which they call *ſuſhutch*, which is a ſort of ſcab, that ſurrounds the whole body under the ribs like a girdle. When this does not come to ſuppurate and fall off, then it is mortal, and, they ſay, every one muſt have this once in his lifetime, as we have the ſmall-pox. Mr. *Steller* gives a more ample account of their diſeaſes and remedies. He relates, that they uſe with ſucceſs the ſponge for drawing out the matter in theſe boils. The Coſſacks apply to their boils the remains of the ſweet-graſs ‖ after they have extracted their brandy, and this often ſucceſsfully reſolves them.

757 844 278 The women uſe ſea raſberries ‡ to haſten their delivery; and alſo a ſort of coral, which they make into powder like crab-eyes, in a gonorrhea. Againſt coſtiveneſs they uſe the fat of the ſea wolf; in gripes, pains of the bowels, and colds, they uſe a

* Vaccinium ramis filiformibus repentibus, foliis ovatis perennantibus.
† Impetrum. ‖ Spondylium foliolis pinnatifidis. ‡ Species fuci.

decoction

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal



163
165
844

The women of this country have ſeldom more than ten children, the common eſtimate is four or five, they bear none after the age of forty. They aſſiſt one another in their deliveries, which are effected with great facility: meanwhile there are midwives in Kamtſchatka, but their number is very ſmall. The accidents which prove fatal to ſo many mothers, are much leſs frequent to theſe women, than inſtances of child-birth in the open air, in roads, or wherever their occupations call them. On

mountebanks. Similar in their impoſtures, their reign and their fall are ſimilar. Various reflections might be made on this ſubject. That a people equally ſimple and uninformed, like the Kamtſchadales, ſhould for a time have been the dupes of the impoſtures of their magicians, is not aſtoniſhing, and will admit of an excuſe: but that ſuch extreme ignorance and credulity ſhould be made ſenſible of their error, and bluſh at it, is a matter of ſurpriſe and congratulation; for even with the moſt enlightened nations of Europe, do not ſome kinds of chamans ſpring up every day, equally perfidious and deſtructive! They have all in the mean time their apoſtles, their proſelytes, and a prodigious number of martyrs.

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal



844 these occaſions they make uſe of their hair,
862 I am told, to tie the umbilical cord, carry home their children themſelves, and immediately give them ſuck. They have no limited time for ſuckling their children, and I have ſeen inſtances of its continuing for four or five years. We may judge from this circumſtance of the ſtrong conſtitution of theſe women. It is obſerved, however, that Kamtſchadales of either ſex, do not live longer than Ruſſians.

278 I forgot to mention a remedy to which
825 the inhabitants of this peninſula have voluntary recourſe in almoſt every diſeaſe: it is to a root called *bears root*, which they ſteep in brandy. The name ſufficiently indicates to whom they are indebted for its knowledge. Perceiving that the bear was fond of eating this herb, and of rolling himſelf upon it when wounded, they imagined it to poſſeſs ſome healing quality, and this